

My name is Linda and I am one of the four founder members. In 1991 we were brought together by Greenwich Social Services in a new type of work called the Marlborough group. They provided a group for mothers, which ran alongside a group for our children. It was facilitated by two social workers, following a therapeutic programme. It also gave us an invaluable space to share with other mothers the experience that had happened to us all.

The groups ran for ten weeks and most of us attended three blocks of ten. Towards the end of the session, we started to discuss how beneficial being able to have a private space and being accepted by non judgmental attitudes had helped us come to terms with what had happened, and how this had enabled us to help our children recover with a more positive outlook. After talking to the social workers and realising they were behind us and encouraging us, we thought about the ways in which we could reach out and give support to other women who were or had been in our situation. We spent a year doing research in to what support was available, visited other projects, and began to fundraise.

We identified that via a Helpline we could offer support to many women, and locally a befriending service could enable mothers to receive support personally. With money raised from all sorts of activities and small donations, we purchased a filing cabinet, stationery equipment, and had leaflets printed. One thing we realised quite quickly was that we were going to have to prove ourselves to the authorities before they would take us seriously and fund us.

The Mosac Helpline was launched on the 10th September 1992, covered by four women, five days a week. I should say at this point that this was only possible due to one of the four allowing the Helpline to be in her home. After the Helpline had been operational for a year we applied to Greenwich council for a grant, we had to satisfy their criteria, namely to form a Management Committee, adopt a Constitution, and supply proof that the work we were doing was ethical and reaching the clients needs. Social Services were extremely helpful, providing us with free supervision, which is essential. We sent monitoring forms to all Helpline callers to provide feedback on the service, ethnic background, and ways to improve. The first year we were awarded a start up grant of £500. We were evaluated by the council each year. In 1993 Mosac gained charitable status.

Over time and due to family commitments we lost two members of the team, this meant that there were huge demands being made on our remaining members. We recruited new members from the Marlborough group. Whilst we were delighted to welcome them, it highlighted the need for separate accommodation for the Helpline. Once again valuable contacts who believed in Mosac arranged for us to be housed rent free in a Social Services building, we moved in January 1994. Throughout the time we were there Mosac continued to grow, and with increased funding we employed a part time Co-ordinator. Volunteer levels did fluctuate however; we recognised the restrictions in only recruiting volunteers who had experience of parenting a sexually abused child.

In 1997 Denise Hubble came to work for Mosac as Co-ordinator, at that time there was one volunteer and things were looking a bit shaky. I think it's fair to say that her expertise and skills have guided Mosac through those times and on to much firmer ground. We have expanded the criteria for volunteering at Mosac, which has enabled us to recruit and train more volunteers.

In 2003 we re-located to Greenwich West Community and Arts Centre, and in true Mosac style started with one room having to accommodate both Helpline and office. Eventually we were offered a suite of rooms in the basement, we have a central office, Helpline room, counselling and meeting room. Also for the first time a dedicated room for play therapy. We continued to be funded by Greenwich Council; a Big Lottery grant enabled us to increase our staff to three. Our services expanded to include, Counselling, Advocacy, Support groups, Play therapy, as well as Befriending and Helpline. We continue to receive grants to run our well recognised 12 week training programme, which we hope, will soon become accredited.

We have worked hard to raise Mosac's profile in the borough and beyond. In 2006 Mosac won the Guardian Charity award, for demonstrating innovative, pioneering work and making an outstanding contribution to social welfare. We continue to receive a large amount of referrals, working with our clients, and external agencies to continually improve our service. In February 2012 Nigel Newton Sawyerr joined Mosac as our Operations Director, working in partnership with the Management Committee, to provide strategic direction and leadership. Working collaboratively with the staff team to deliver high quality front line services.

Also in 2012 we were on the move again due to the demolition of the rear of West Greenwich house, The Forum at Greenwich became our new home and within a year we had occupied two different sets of rooms.

2013 was a significant year for Mosac. In April we moved to purpose-built premises within the Deborah Ubee Trust based in Greenwich. May saw the production of the Mosac and Central school of speech and drama play "From the mouths of mothers" at the Pleasance theatre in Islington the audience came from a wide range backgrounds and experiences. Below are some of the audience quotes received:

"This was an amazing play and needs to be shown everywhere and in schools and the NHS. I work as a TA in primary schools and seeing this made me realise you don't know what any child might be going through".

"I'm an aid worker, which brings me into contact with vulnerable children. Seeing this play is likely to further sensitise me about how I engage with families I encounter in refugee camps etc. I don't work with young children, but I do work with young people (13+) and it has made me more aware of behaviours and things which aren't always as they seem. Also that there are so many emotional reactions from similar abuse. You must be so vigilant about what goes on and any warning signs. Trust your instincts".

On September 10<sup>th</sup> 2013 Mosac was 21. We held a memorable celebration event which brought together most of the amazing people who have been involved in our journey.

If you have been inspired by our story so far and would like to join us please contact me  
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Best wishes Linda Randall